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Amendments to the Specification:

Amend Brief Description of Drawings at page 7 by adding the following paragraph at line 19:

Figure 10 shows an example of a cable network 1000 implemented in accordance with a standardized DOCSIS protocol.

Please add the following new paragraph on page 25 before the paragraph starting at line 25:

Figure 10 shows an example of a cable network 1000 implemented in accordance with a standardized DOCSIS protocol such as the well-known DOCSIS 1.1 RF Interface Specification (document control number SP-RF[v1.1-I04-000407, April 7, 2000. As illustrated in the example of Figure 10, cable network 1000 includes a CMTS 1002, which, for example, may be located at the Head End of the cable network. In at least one embodiment, the CMTS 1002 includes functionality for performing one or more of the following operations: service flow management operations relating to downstream channel service flow management (e.g., 1007); packet classification operations relating to downstream channel classification (e.g., 1005); MAC management operations relating to MAC management of downstream channels (e.g., 1003); etc.

Please replace the paragraph on page 25 starting at line 25 to line 31 with the following paragraph:

~~Further, it~~ It will be appreciated that, according to specific embodiments, at least a portion of functions described herein which are performed by the DCMTS (e.g. FIGURE 7), CMTS (e.g. FIGURES 8, 10), or selected components thereof, may be implemented in a centralized CMTS system (e.g. residing the Head End of the cable network, as shown, for example, in FIGURE 5), and/or may be implemented at one or more distributed CMTS (DCMTS) systems (e.g. residing at one or more fiber nodes, as shown, for example, in FIGURE 9). For example, in one embodiment, the DCMTS may permit the centralized CMTS (at the Head End) to perform a first portion of functions while the DCMTS performs a second portion of functions.